

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Diné Power Authority (DPA), an enterprise of the Navajo Nation, proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the Four Corners area to a terminus in southern Nevada. This draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) was prepared to document the analysis of the potential effects that the proposed action, the Navajo Transmission Project (NTP), could have on the natural, human, and cultural resources in the project area. The preparation of an EIS is required because of Federal government involvement, which includes (1) granting rights-of-way across Federal and tribal lands, and (2) certain participation by Western Area Power Administration (Western), an agency of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

ORGANIZATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

The body of the DEIS contains five chapters and is followed by five sections of reference materials. Chapter 1 provides an explanation of the purpose and need for the project, as well as the planning requirements, environmental review, and licensing or permits anticipated to implement the project. Chapter 2 provides a description of the alternatives including the proposed action. This includes examining alternatives to implementing the proposed transmission line, as well as identifying and examining alternative routes for the proposed transmission line. Chapter 3 presents a description of the natural, human, and cultural environment of the project area, as it exists prior to the proposed action. This information served as the baseline data to assess potential impacts of the proposed transmission line. Chapter 4 contains a description of the potential consequences, or impacts, on the environment that could result from no action or implementing the proposed action, and measures to mitigate the impacts. Chapter 5 provides a description of the comprehensive program for agency coordination and public participation that was conducted in concert with the environmental process. The remaining sections provide bibliographic references, list of preparers and contributors, list of acronyms, glossary, and index.

Additional explanatory information that supports the DEIS is included in five appendices. Appendix A contains an overview of the route selection process, including study and analysis methods and tables comparing the alternative routes for each resource. Appendix B provides a comprehensive explanation regarding the addition and/or elimination of alternative routes or segments of alternative routes. Appendix C describes the alternative routes addressed in the DEIS; that is, the four alternative routes in the eastern portion of the project area and six alternative routes in the western portion. Appendix D contains data supporting the biological resources sections of Chapters 3 and 4. Appendix E contains information supporting the land use sections of Chapters 3 and 4.

The DEIS is accompanied by a map volume containing 19 maps that illustrate the alternatives and represent the various natural, human, and cultural resources studied for the DEIS. These maps should be reviewed in conjunction with the text of the DEIS. Each map is listed at the beginning of the map volume.

DOCUMENTATION SUPPORTING THE DEIS

Beginning with the initial studies, the process, methods, and study and analysis results have been compiled and/or documented for a comprehensive record. These documents and data supporting the DEIS, which are available upon request from Western, are listed below.

- *Regional Environmental Feasibility Study* (June 1992)—A report on the feasibility of alternative routes for the proposed transmission line.
- *Scoping Report* (January 1994)—A report on the scoping process that initiated the Federal environmental impact statement (EIS) studies and analyses, including summaries of issues and concerns identified from agency and public meetings.
- *Mitigation Plan* (September 1996)—A plan documenting the mitigation measures committed for project alternatives.
- *Resource Data Supporting the DEIS* (September 1996)—Information describing the inventory and impact assessment methods and results for each environmental resource studied.